(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to give license to private sector also besides public sector for importing wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of Government agencies in the country at present which have the right to import wheat?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Import of wheat is at present, canalized through State Trading Enterprises. The Government authorized the State Trading Corporation (STC) to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat in February, 2006 for the Southern States. In addition to this, in April, 2006 the Government has approved the import of 30 lakh tonnes of wheat by the STC to augment the buffer stocks.

Production and import of wheat

3700. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of quantity of wheat produced since 2001 and that procured by FCI, year-wise;

(b) the estimated quantity of wheat production in the current harvesting of Kharif season;

(c) the quantity of wheat targeted to be procured from farmers by Government during the current season and at what price and the quantity procured, so far;

(d) the details of buffer stock of wheat estimated to be available with Government month-wise till the next harvest *vis-a-vis* the volume stipulated under food-security norm;

(e) whether large quantity of wheat is contemplated to be imported from overseas; and

(f) if so, the details thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The details of wheat production since crop years 2000-01 and 2005-06 and the corresponding procurement by Government agencies in the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2001-02 to 2006-07 is given at Statement (*See* below)

(b) As per the 3rd advance estimate for crop year 2005-06 being marketed in 2006-07, wheat production in the country is estimated to be 71.54 million tonnes.

(c) Since the Government follows the policy of open ended procurement, no targets for wheat procurement are set. During the current season (RMS 2006-07), wheat procurement upto 16.5.2006 is 92.01 lakh tonnes for which Government agencies have paid an Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs. 650 per qtl. as well as a bonus of Rs. 50 per qtl. over the MSP.

(d) The month-wise stocks of wheat till the next harvest will depend on the total procurement of wheat in RMS 2006-07, off-take of wheat under TPDS and other welfare schemes, month-wise receipt of wheat through imports and policy decisions on demand management of wheat.

(e) and (f) The Government has taken a decision to import 35 lakh tonnes of wheat in 2006-07.

Statement

Details of Wheat Production

Crop Year	Production (in lakh tonnes)	Corresponding RMS	Procurement (in lakh tonnes)		
			FCI	State Agencies	Total
2000-01	696.8	2001-02	43.87	162.43	206.30
2001-02	727.7	2002-03	43.82	146.72	190.54
2002-03	657.6	2003-04	35.48	122.53	158.01
2003-04	721.5	2004-05	32.66	135.29	167.95
2004-05	686.4	2005-06	22.28	125.57	147.85
2005-06*	715.4	2006-07**	13.33	78.52	91.85

* 3rd advance estimate

** as on 12.5.2006.